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SUBJECT: FM JEREMIC DISCUSSES THE KOSOVO CONUNDRUM AND
PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION DOCUMENT WITH THE NAC

REF: A. SERBIA'S PRESENTATION DOCUMENT (E-MAILED TO

EUR/RPM)

[1](#)B. BELGRADE 1223

Classified By: Charge Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic discussed Serbia's Partnership Presentation Document and possible ways forward on Kosovo with NATO PermReps on September 5. Jeremic was forward-leaning on engagement with the Alliance through PfP, but acknowledged Serbians' love-hate relationship to NATO would not go away. While voicing "cautious optimism" that a compromise solution could be found for Kosovo, and arguing that negotiations would proceed more quickly without a deadline, he did not offer any hope that Serbia would accept independence for Kosovo. Virtually every NATO PermRep told Jeremic that NATO bashing has got to stop and hard compromises are necessary on Kosovo. However, some Allies were soft on the negotiating deadline and on the need for a new UN Security Council resolution on Kosovo. End Summary.

SYG SUMMARIZES A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

[1](#)2. (C) NATO Secretary General (SYG) Jaap de Hoop Scheffer welcomed FM Jeremic to the NAC, saluting Serbia's Partnership Presentation Document (PD) REF A) as clear, concise, and ambitious. He noted that Serbia needs to conclude an Information Security Agreement in order to fully participate in many of the proposed areas of cooperation. He applauded the PD's strong commitment to meeting obligations to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and affirmed NATO's support for Serbia to take its rightful place in the Euro-Atlantic community. Referring to the vitriolic rhetoric emanating from other high officials in Belgrade (REF B), however, he called on the Serbian Government to "speak with one voice," reminded Jeremic of Belgrade's agreement to avoid statements or actions that might jeopardize security in Kosovo, and said that unless otherwise informed NATO would assume that the PD represented the authoritative GOS position on NATO. On Kosovo, the SYG hoped that the November 17 elections would advance normalization of relations between Kosovar Serbs and Albanians. He affirmed full support for the current round of Troika-led negotiations, but concluded that if they did not lead to a compromise agreement, the Ahtisaari proposal was "the best way forward."

JEREMIC PROFESSES "CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM"

[1](#)3. (C) Jeremic frankly acknowledged that Serbians would "never forget the tragic events of 1999" (the NATO air

campaign) but said Serbs want "to look forward, not backward." He insisted that the PD represented Belgrade's "clear readiness to play a constructive role in building a new security architecture for Southeast Europe," and said the Information Security Agreement would be signed and a Serbian Mission to NATO opened soon. But like most Allies, his mind was on Kosovo. He expressed "cautious optimism" that the current round of Pristina-Belgrade talks could lead to a mutually-acceptable compromise, looked forward to direct Serb-Kosovar talks in New York as a bellwether (although he repeatedly referred to the Kosovars as "Albanians"), and asked Allies to support lifting the Troika's 120-day deadline to make the Kosovars "negotiate seriously." Jeremic closed by quoting Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural address: "With malice toward none and charity toward all..." Serbia would contribute toward a lasting solution.

ALLIES CALL FOR AN END TO "NATO BASHING"

¶4. (C) Ambassador Nuland told Jeremic that an open-ended negotiating period would not produce results, and said plainly that "NATO bashing has got to stop." She also hailed Jeremic's optimism, and pointed to the many positive elements in the PD, including its ICTY reference and ambitious program of cooperation. She noted Jeremic's invocation of Lincoln and reminded the Serbian delegation that Lincoln was regarded as one of our greatest Presidents because he led the nation through a period of difficult sacrifices. Sixteen other Allies intervened along similar lines, virtually all calling for moderation in Belgrade's public comments and for real flexibility on the Kosovo talks. Spain asked about Serbia's level of ambition with NATO (as the PD does not address that point), to which Jeremic responded, "full membership") reminding the NAC that President Tadic had said as much to the SYG. To those calling for implementing the Ahtisaari proposal in the absence of an agreement, Jeremic asked

rhetorically why the Albanians would show flexibility if Allies were going to give them everything they wanted for stonewalling. Bulgarian Ambassador Ivanov unhelpfully affirmed the position that Kosovo's final status should be "validated by a new UNSC resolution." Other than that, Allies did not break ranks, but a few showed where their sympathies lie: Romania insisted that NATO was "not taking sides, but seeking a secure environment for all." Norway, Italy, Slovakia, and Spain also made calibrated presentations showing they are Serbia's friends at the NAC table.

OLSON